Title of Course and Course Number: Politics of Sexual Violence  
Pol 373  
Credits: 3

Description of course consistent with catalog: This course provides an overview of contemporary issues of sexual violence. It defines the scope and reality of sexual violence and examines the processes by which sexual violence is perpetuated and maintained at the micro and macro levels of society.

Course Prerequisites: WS 110, WS 150, AACS 150, or Pol 272.

Course Objectives:  
To examine the ways in which sexual violence functions as a means of social control. To study how separate acts of violence against women are interrelated. To examine the consequences of living in a rape culture for girls and boys and women and men. To evaluate strategies and models for personal and political change.

Student learning outcomes:  
At the end of the semester, students should be able to:  
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the prevalence and incidence of various forms of sexual violence.

2. Explain and evaluate theories that justify sexual violence.

3. Explain and evaluate theories of causation of sexual violence.

4. Explain and evaluate feminist frameworks for analyzing sexual violence.

5. Analyze the relationship between violence against women and children and the family as an institution.

6. Analyze orally or in writing the role of popular culture in sustaining rape-supportive myths and attitudes.

7. Describe and analyze the global phenomenon of trafficking of women and children.

8. Demonstrate an understanding orally or in writing of the commonalities between the many forms of sexual violence.
9. Explain why violence against girls and women is considered a health issue.

10. Analyze and evaluate legal strategies to combat violence against women.

11. Describe and analyze individual and collective action regarding issues of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and intimate violence.

Topical outline of the course content:
1. Living in a rape culture: the reality and scope of sexual violence
2. Theories of sexual violence: an examination of the prevailing analytical frameworks for understanding sexual violence.
3. Forms of sexual violence: this section will focus on how sexual violence is manifested and identified. Attention will be paid to specific forms of sexual violence, such as, femicide, rape, battery, incest and molestation of children, sexual harassment, prostitution, pornography, and a variety of forms of sexual intrusion that are deemed minor or inconsequential by society.
4. Maintaining sexual violence: in this section of the course we will examine the role of cultural myths, ideology, media, and socialization in perpetuating a system of sexual violence.
5. Cultural and institutional responses to sexual violence: this section will explore contemporary responses to sexual violence, such as the Violence Against Women Act, Megan’s Law, the debate over domestic violence protections, etc.
6. Surviving sexual violence: this section of the course will examine the literature on the ways in which girls and women have resisted and survived sexual violence.
7. Sexual violence as a global phenomenon: this section will focus on violence against girls and women in various settings and the international efforts to recognize such violence as a human rights violation.
8. Transforming a rape culture: this section will focus on strategies for personal and systemic change.

Guidelines/suggestions for teaching methods and student learning activities:
This course is primarily lecture and discussion, using films and guest speakers where appropriate. Students will keep a “content journal.” The
journal will provide the basis for daily participation and the required written work. Class participation is required; it includes answering questions, asking questions, explaining assigned materials, initiating discussion, sharing experiences related to course topics, and challenging information presented.

Guidelines/suggestions for methods of student assessment (student learning outcomes):

Students will be expected to write analytical papers, on topics cleared with the instructor. Students must determine their topic for this paper and submit a written abstract (title, one-two paragraph description and preliminary bibliography) During the last two classes of the semester students should be prepared to share their research with the class. Additionally, students will be required to familiarize themselves with the Women’s Studies library collection and specifically those journals that focus on sexual violence.

Suggested readings, texts:


Bibliography


Herman, Judith. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence, from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York: Basic Books.


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Original Departmental approval date:

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